



Gala
CIVIL
RIGHTS
COMMITTEE

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NEWS BULLETIN

THE GALA CIVIL RIGHTS COMMITTEE has been hard at work seeking support for the recommendation of the Alberta Human Rights Commission that lesbians and gay men be protected in their employment. This recommendation is now before the Minister of Labour, Les Young. We hope to persuade him and other legislators that we need this protection in the Individual's Rights Protection Act. The Minister recently heard directly from us.

WHAT HAPPENED

Three representatives from GALA met with Les Young, the Minister of Labour and in charge of human rights legislation. The meeting was cordial and went fairly well with lots of questions and discussion back and forth. The most significant outcome is that the Minister indicated he would attempt to set up a meeting with some of the party caucus to discuss the protection in employment issue with lesbians and gay men. It is hoped this meeting will occur in late January or early February. Anyone interested may attend.

NOW THEN

We will continue with the petition. If you haven't signed it, please do so. There is more coming too, read on.

CONSTITUENCY MEETINGS

We are encouraging people to meet with their MLAs. This is important work that you can do. Recently eight constituents of Edmonton-Centre met with Mary LeMessurier. Those folks felt they had raised her consciousness of gays and lesbians in her constituency. They also realized how important and empowering it was for themselves. Ms LeMessurier spoke of the need to have others meet with their MLAs, indicating it would be difficult to have the legislation passed. We will be actively assisting individuals to meet with their MLAs.

A PROVINCE WIDE CAMPAIGN

We've had some response from individuals in the smaller centers like Drumheller and Camrose. Even in Medicine Hat! Those folks are quite brave, writing letters to their MLAs and asking questions at meetings.

Several of the GALA Civil Rights Committee will go to Calgary this month to speak at a gathering of lesbians and gays. We hope to motivate some people to take up the work in that area of the province.

HAVE YOU WRITTEN YOUR MLA? DO IT TODAY!

A NEW LETTER CAMPAIGN

We are going to circulate some new letters for you to sign. We want those legislators to know we haven't been lost in the blizzard. When you sign them it helps us if you know who is your MLA.

Many people have had a reply to letters they signed a few months ago. Most MLAs have been non-committal, however Les Young, the Minister of Labour rises to new heights of misunderstanding in his recent reply to writers:

"It is understood, of course, that sexual orientation and sexual practice are personal matters and should remain so. As you are aware, neither sexual orientation nor sexual practice is a visible characteristic. An employee's sexual conduct will not usually be known unless it is somehow communicated by the employee to the employer or to fellow workers. Because sexual orientation and practice are not visible characteristics, and unlike religion, should not be conducted publicly, they are different from protected characteristics now in the Act."

We feel that this is probably the party line. If you find this reply offensive, perhaps you may wish to write to Les Young again.

DID YOU KNOW

Both Mary LeMessurier and Les Young mentioned several times the many letters they are receiving. They've never heard from so many of us! And they are counting them.

HAVE YOU HEARD OR READ

...an article about the meeting with Les Young in the Edmonton Journal

...a radio interview of two GALA representatives with Wayne Krouse on CJAX

IDEAS

Do you have any ideas or other things that GALA can do to get the proposal of the Alberta Human Rights Commission passed? If so, please call us. We can be reached at 426-1516.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

GATE GENERAL MEETING --- Wednesday February 6th at 8 pm.

WOMONSPACE DANCE --- January 19th at 8 pm. Phone for details.

WOMONSPACE SKATING PARTY --- January 11th at 7 pm. Phone for details.

GATE DANCE --- February 23rd at the Bonnie Doon Community Centre, 9 pm.

DIGNITY POTLUCK --- January 20 & February 17 at Paul Kane House at 5 pm.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU TOO!